



THE VOTER

September 2015 Vol. 42 No. 5

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

Message from the Editor

(President Janie Shipley is taking a brief hiatus from this column.)

“Why did you join the League of Women Voters?” Holley Ulbrich asked at our recent newcomer event. Holley gave her own answer first – that she learned about the LWV in another location first, came here and didn’t find a chapter, so she decided to start our local League. We heard from Eleanor Hare that the newly formed League was about to tackle a problem, but needed someone to head it up. It was a job Eleanor knew she could sink her teeth into, and so she did. Some folks want to be more informed citizens. Dianne Haselton, who wasn’t in attendance that night, has told a different “why” story every time I’ve heard her, which tells me that the League is a great organization to join.



I joined the League because I needed something to do with my time – the kids had gone off to college, I had taken care of my mother, and was about to complete executing her will. I’ve always been a volunteer (Little League, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Morrison Elementary) and now it looked like it was *my* time. Rather than finding groups that do what I do (which I had tried and hadn’t worked), I figured out what kind of people I wanted to hang out with. Well, that was easy: smart women who know how to think. Women who get the job done. Women who are supportive. Yes, yes, yes.

I already knew that politics wasn’t a passion for me, but I found that it didn’t really matter. I renew my membership every year because this is the supportive group of people (women AND men) who got me my confidence back, gave me opportunities to hone my public speaking skills, gave me (pushed me into!) opportunities to lead. I know that politics, public issues, and advocacy are not really the things I love, even though they are the reasons lots of people do choose to join the League. For me, the best thing about being part of the League is that there is a place in the League for people like me to learn and grow and try out our skills in the company of bright, thoughtful, articulate engaged people like Holley, Eleanor, and Dianne.

Yours in League,

Paula Appling

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voter Clemson Area
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Photo Credits: Eleanor Hare, Mike Stafford

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tues, Sept 1	BOARD MEETING , 107 N Fairplay Street, Seneca, 5:30 p.m.
Tues, Sept 15	GENERAL MEETING , What's Happening in Columbia? With Senators Martin, Alexander, and Representatives Clary and Collins; OLLI, 7:15 social, 7:30 program
Tues, Oct 20	GENERAL MEETING , Campaign Finance Reform, OLLI, 7:15 social, 7:30 program

September: What's Happening in Columbia?

Our September meeting (Tuesday the 15th at 7:15 for social time, 7:30 for program) is a special annual event, a chance to visit with some of our legislators and get their perspectives on what happened in Columbia this year and what's still on their plate for the upcoming session. Senators Larry Martin and Thomas Alexander and Representatives Gary Clary and Neil Collins will be present to give us the benefit of their perspective and answer questions from those present. The meeting is open to the public, so bring your friends and neighbors as well as your questions and concerns.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Looking Ahead to October

Looking ahead to October, we are going to start thinking about a national agenda issue dear to our hearts, campaign finance reform. Cheryl Lee and Patty Warner will share an adaptation of a national LWV PowerPoint on this issue, followed by a brief synopsis of the pros and cons of the proposed constitutional convention to overturn the Citizens United decision that opened the floodgates for campaign contributions. In the spring we will participate in a national consensus process on this issue to formulate our position on which we can then advocate. While only League members can participate in the consensus meeting in the spring, this is an informational meeting that is open to everyone--the more the merrier!

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Voter Registration Efforts

This past spring, we registered high school seniors at 5 local high schools: West-Oak, Daniel, Liberty, Seneca and Walhalla. We registered 115 young people at West-Oak alone and 386 total from the 5 schools. Many thanks to Reggie Turetzky, Paulette Chassin, Linda Gahan, Elinor Barron, and Elizabeth Adams for helping!

Submitted by Cheryl Lee

In May, LWVCA had a voter outreach that concentrated on seniors and minorities. With the help of the Pickens County Election Commission, we registered and got photo IDs for 24 people: 13 people at Clemson Downs and 11 at Abel Baptist Church. Photo IDs were particularly important to some of the older people at Clemson Downs who are losing their vision and thus, their driver's license. If you have older friends or family members, encourage them (or drive them to Pickens) to get a photo ID made to ensure that they will continue to be able to vote.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich



New League Study on Health Care

Saturday morning, August 29, State Board member David Ball met with interested Leaguers from Clemson and Greenville to discuss possible directions for the new League study of Health Care. The first step in developing a study is to determine the topics to be studied and the possible impact on legislation of the topics selected. At this meeting, and at a previous meeting in Charleston, League members discussed topics they would like to have addressed.

David opened the meeting by telling us that every industrialized country in the world, except ours, provides health care for all its citizens. We spend more than twice what any other nation spends and are only 39th in the ranking of world health.

A number of problem areas were discussed: medical-loss ratio (the percentage of insurance policy premiums that are spent on medical treatment), malpractice insurance, defensive medicine, shortage of doctors who accept Medicare or Medicaid, women's health issues (reproductive rights, access to contraception, abortion, discrimination against women in medical research), lack of accurate sexual education in schools, inability of the government to negotiate prescription drug prices, simplification of medical record-keeping, cost containment strategies, public policy with respect to preventive medicine, medical vans to reach those without transportation and use of county health clinics to deliver vaccines and medications.

From discussions with leagues around the state, David and his team will be attempting to narrow the study to a few areas. They will then design consensus questions and provide background material that will be approved by State Board before being forwarded to local leagues next year.

Narrowing the study and designing consensus questions is a major task. If you would like to provide input to this study, please contact David (davidsball47@gmail.com).

Do you have medications you need to dispose of?

Project Rx – A River Remedy is “a community collaboration to protect our rivers and residents by properly disposing of medicine.” Project Rx is sponsoring a collection event and providing a drop-off location for unwanted medications, both prescription & over the counter.

Drop off your unwanted medications at
Oconee Campus of Greenville Memorial Hospital in Seneca, front entrance
September 19th 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

This drop-off is for households and is free and anonymous. Participants should leave the name of the drug visible on medication labels and use a black permanent marker to eliminate any personal information.

Project Rx is a community collaboration to protect our rivers and residents by properly disposing of medicines. With the support of local law enforcement, the medication collected is disposed of through incineration.

The Project Rx taskforce is led by a community collaboration of Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, Carolinas Institute for Community Policing, Greenville County Medical Society, Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Greenville Family Partnership, Greenville Health System, Greenville Technical College, Renewable Water Resources, and Upstate Forever.

For more information, visit the Project Rx website at www.aRiverRemedy.org or call 864-299-4000.

Submitted by Sandra Gray

National Voter Registration Day is September 22 and once again, the LWVCA plans to be registering students. If you want to lend a hand, please contact Cheryl Lee at 654-4283 for more information.

Submitted by Cheryl Lee

Celebrating Women's Equality Day with Wine, Women and Song!

Women's Equality Day 2015, celebrating the 95th anniversary of the time women in America won the right to vote for the first time with passage of the 19th amendment, was held August 25 at the OLLI Center. Entertainment of music and song was provided by League member Elizabeth Adams and her band, *Six Chickens and a Beer*. President Janie Shipley welcomed a group of approximately 40 members and 10 guests. Holley Ulbrich gave a brief historical overview of the Clemson Area League of Women Voters. Eleanor Hare and Holley Ulbrich, the only two charter members present at the celebration Tuesday evening, were recognized as continuous members of the Clemson Area League since its organization in 1968.

During the course of the evening, members "met" three outstanding League of Women Voters of South Carolina members who influenced policy and politics in the State. We heard from Liz Patterson (presented by Paula Appling) who was the first woman elected to Congress from SC. Harriet Keyserling (Sandra Gray) described how she was a representative to the SC House from Beaufort County 1977-1993 and Chairman of the Energy Committee. She was able to influence conservation efforts and slow the importation of nuclear waste into the State. Jean Toal (Holley Ulbrich) told how she was a lawyer who served in the SC House of Representatives for 13 years before being elected Chief Justice of SC Supreme Court in 2000.

Several Board members shared with the group what influenced them to join the Clemson League. Holley Ulbrich answered questions from the guests about the League, including inquires about various League activities, nonpartisan functions and budgetary and dues issues.

Many thanks to Arlene Stewart, Aleta Robinson and their team for providing food and decorations for the League's evening celebration of Women's Equality Day and to *Six Chickens and a Beer* for providing the social lubricant for a wonderful evening!

Submitted by Sandra Gray



Six Chickens and a Beer band members (l-r) Elizabeth Adams (button accordion), Jen Ruth (bass and ukulele), Mike Ellison (fiddle and guitar) and Ed Broyles (mandolin and guitar) delighted us with "roots" music – a mix of celtic, blues, cajun, old time, swing, jazz and folk and the recently added "political commentary" genre!



Past President Holley Ulbrich, along with current President Janie Shipley, talked about the League and its history, introduced guests and answered questions. Asked one: “*Do you support any presidential candidates?*” No, we don’t support any particular candidate, ever, but we wholly support their right to run!

The buzz of good conversation was continuous against a backdrop of the delightful music from *Six Chickens and a Beer!*



New friends, good conversation, fine live music and fabulous food! What more could an evening want?

An Elections Dilemma

What happens when a county council does not allocate enough money to the Board of Registration & Elections (Board) to carry out legally required elections?

Pickens County is about to find out.

State funds can be used only for poll workers, rovers and ballot printing costs for statewide elections. The Pickens County Council (Council) provides all other funding for the Board in its budget. The primary area of contention is funding for temporary workers and overtime. Council cut the Board's funding request for temporary staff and overtime by \$20,000 (42%). The areas impacted are:

1. Voter Registration and Office Hours. State law requires that the office be open for voter registration the same hours as other county offices. In Pickens County there are only two full-time staff. Annual leave, sick leave, meetings and other required activities would close the office during normal office hours if trained temporary workers were not available.
2. Operation of Elections. For several weeks before an election, temporary workers are necessary to prepare the voting machines and poll books, answer phones, provide for in-person absentee voting, and many other activities. After the polls close, temporary workers are necessary in order to process the votes and report results. Again, trained temporary workers are needed. Paying overtime to the office manager is an efficient way to cover some of these activities.

The Executive Director of the SC State Elections Commission wrote to the Chair of Council to "urge County Council to provide adequate funding to fully support upcoming elections in Pickens County." The Board has written to Council explaining the need for full funding of temporary staff and overtime. The League has expressed its concern that the Board be provided with adequate resources.

The Council has not responded to the concerns expressed, other than to declare that the state is responsible for funding elections.

The Board says that the Council has not provided enough money for workers to carry out this year's elections (two presidential preference primaries, June primaries and runoffs). The Board cannot legally spend more money than is provided by Council in its budget.

If the Council adds sufficient funds to the Board's appropriation, these elections will take place. If not, either some other entity provides the money or citizens of Pickens County are in danger of not being able to vote in these statewide elections.

Additional information is available at clemsonarea-members.sc.lwvnet.org/MoreMiscNotes.html

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

Dues Are Due!

LWVCA's fiscal year began June 1, 2015: your membership dues are now due! Please mail a check to

LWVCA
PO Box 802
Clemson, SC 29633

Dues per member are \$60; a second member in the household pays \$30. Student dues are \$25. Dues are not tax-deductible.

The Per-Member-Payment (PMP) to LWVUS is \$32 and to LWVSC it is \$14, leaving us only \$14 to finance our local operation. This covers the cost of our publication, the **VOTER**. Additional contributions are needed and much appreciated. If you wish to make a tax-deductible contribution, please make a separate check to LWV Education Fund.

Submitted by Bill Hare

Observer Corps: Pickens County Board of Registration & Elections

May 26, 2015 and August 4, 2015

May 26. This meeting was called for the special purpose of drafting a letter to the Pickens County Council to request that Council restore the \$30,000 requested for temporary staff. The letter was signed by six Board members. The remaining member was out of town. Attended by Frances Plotnik, Aleta Robinson, Bill Hare, and Eleanor Hare.

August 4. On June 17, Marci Andino, Executive Director of the SC State Elections Commission, wrote to the Chair of the Pickens County Council, urging the Council to provide adequate funding to fully support upcoming Elections in Pickens County. The Board has not received communications from anyone on Council with respect to Director Andino's letter. The Board is conserving costs in every way possible, but now estimates that they will run out of funds in February. Attended by Charlotte Holmes and new member Sarah McNeill.

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

Observer Corps: Pickens County Council

June 15, 2015 and August 17, 2015

June 15. Janie and Eleanor spoke during the public input, supporting access to voter services and the right of the voter to fair, well-run elections. Members of the Council replied, linking lack of funding for the Pickens County Board of Registration & Elections to lack of money from the state. Council has money that has not been appropriated. Councilman Ponder complained about statements made about Pickens County development activities in the Greenville Online. The Council Chair told elected officials that they could not "beat up" on Council members during the public input, causing a problem for the Coroner, who had intended to ask for additional part-time staff. Also in attendance were Charlotte Holmes, Frances Plotnik, Aleta Robinson, Diana Stafford, and Mike Stafford.

August 17. Eleanor Hare, who spoke during the public input, reported that state funding for Pickens County elections had increased by \$168,000 (236%) from the previous year and county funding had decreased by \$20,000. The funding cut by the county was primarily to line items for temporary workers and overtime. Billy Grant, chairman of the fire district outside Easley's city limits, expressed concern that the Council had cancelled a contract of his fire district with the City of Easley and that his fire district has been left out of Council's discussion of how to revamp the county fire protection system.

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

Meeting minutes can be found at these addresses:

Clemson City Council: www.cityofclemson.org/city/city-council-agendas-meetings-and-minutes

Seneca City Council: www.seneca.sc.us/Government/CouncilDocuments.aspx

Anderson City Council: www.cityofandersonsc.com/council/minutes.html

Pickens Co Sch Board: www.pickens.k12.sc.us/Pages/Board%20of%20Trustees/Meetings%202014-2015.aspx

Pickens County Council: www.co.pickens.sc.us/council/Agendas/default.aspx

Oconee County Council: www.oconeesc.com/Council/CouncilAgendasMinutes.aspx

Anderson County Council: www.andersoncountysc.org/web/Council_Minutes00.asp

Clemson City Council 1st and 3rd Monday, 7:30 pm.
 Seneca City Council 2nd Tuesday, 6:00 pm.
 Pickens County Council 1st Monday, 6:30 pm.
 Oconee County Council 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm.

Anderson County Council 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:00 pm
 Pickens County School Board 4th Monday, 7:00 pm.
 Oconee County School Board 3rd Monday, 6:00 pm.
 Anderson Co. School Board 3rd Monday, 6:00 pm

Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Phone (opt) _____

____ I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

____ I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "*League of Women Voters Ed Fund*" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

____ I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

Visit our website at www.lwvclemsonarea.org and contact us at lwvclemson@gmail.com.

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P. O. Box 802

Clemson, SC 29633